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Cervical cancer and HPV vaccine: Awareness and acceptability among a population of university women in Morocco

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Cervical cancer is a public health problem in the world with approximately 527 624 new cases and 265 672 deaths annually of which more than 86% occur within developing countries. In Morocco, cervical cancer is the second women's cancer after the breast cancer, with an estimated of 2258 new cases and 1076 deaths annually. The last decade has been marked by the introduction of a vaccine against this cancer. Young girls between the ages of 9 and 26 represent the target population for the HPV vaccine. The adoption of this vaccination by the population is dependent on several factors, in particular socio-economic. Thus, in this work we are interested in evaluating the knowledge and attitudes of university girls towards this vaccine. To this end, we conducted a multicenter survey with 1087 young woman in different regions of Morocco. The results show that 70.4% of participants are sensitized towards cervical cancer, 85% of whom said they have never heard of HPV. The rate of sensitization to HPV vaccination is about 7.8%. The rate of HPV vaccination coverage in our study population does not exceed 0.09%. After sensitizing all participants towards HPV and its means of preventing, we recorded an acceptability rate of anti-HPV vaccination of about 68%. In addition, age, family income, branch of study, educational level of parents, and awareness of HPV vaccine and cervical cancer were found as a factors influencing the acceptability of this vaccine. Our study revealed a low level of awareness and knowledge about HPV and HPV vaccination. Similarly, we have focused on reticence to this vaccine in our study population. This situation will not help to improve the prevention of this cancer in our country, which requires the establishment of awareness actions towards the disease and its means of primary and secondary prevention. The introduction of HPV vaccination into the national immunization program will encourage a large population to be vaccinated. In addition, efforts must be made to sensitize physicians on their axial role in raising awareness and prescribing this vaccine.

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